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EXECUTIVE BOARD

March 1992 organizational session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 24 March 1992, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Miss SETH (India)

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This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent to Ms. M. A. Cuna, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, room H-12K, UNICEF House, 3 United Nations Plaza, New York.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, according to Executive Board decision 1990/1, the Board's organizational session should decide on the draft agenda and the organization of work, examine the status of documentation for the regular session, and deal with other organizational or procedural matters as it deemed necessary.

2. In 1991 the world had witnessed the rapid emergence of a group of independent countries and a change in the political climate and in international relations. There were also signs of impending change in South Africa, although those indications were combined with fears of a devastating drought. The opportunities and dangers in the current world posed a challenge to the Board to play its crucial role of keeping the focus of the world on the betterment of the lives of children and women.

3. In January 1992, she had led the UNICEF delegation at the Special Session of the UNICEF/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP) in Geneva, which had considered the programmes developed by WHO and UNICEF in response to the Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children, including such important issues as vaccine supply and the control of cholera, the paper on the management of district health systems based on primary health care, and the implementation of Board decision 1991/22 on breast-feeding. The report of the meeting would be discussed during the Board's June session. She drew attention to the serious problem of the increasing cost of vaccines, which would rise from $46.8 million to $89 million in 1992, partly because of the increase in population. The Secretariat had been instructed to prepare a paper on that issue for the Board's consideration in June.

4. Referring to item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda (E/ICEF/1992/L.3), she said that the Board had before it a document on its future work and procedures (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5), which examined such questions as the rotation of the chairmanship, parallel meetings of the committees, the extension of the Board's regular session and the document overload. That paper also contained her recommendation concerning issues on which broad agreement could be reached.

5. With reference to item 5 (c), concerning the provisional agenda for the June session, she sought the opinion of Board members on the proposed allocation of time so as to ensure maximum efficiency. In that context, she pointed out that document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9 contained an alternative timetable for the June session proposed by the United Kingdom delegation.

6. Document E/ICEF/1992/L.3 contained a list of possible topics for informal sessions to be held between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. during the June session. In recent years, efforts had been made to avoid programming two or more meetings on the same morning, since delegations had difficulty covering more than one.

(The Chairman)

The Board should select 9 out of the 15 topics from the list, which was open to other suggestions.

7. Agenda item 6 pertained to the recommendation for the 1992 UNICEF Maurice Pate Award (ICEF/1992/P/L.1), which had been made in accordance with Board decision 1991/2.

8. With reference to agenda item 7, she said that the Programme Committee had reviewed the report of the 2nd meeting of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/UNICEF Joint Committee on Education (E/ICEF/1991/L.13) and, in general, supported the strategy agreed on by the two organizations. Owing to a technical oversight, however, no formal decision had been taken on the recommendations contained in the document. The UNESCO Executive Board had adopted a decision endorsing the recommendations of the Joint Committee. The draft recommendation which she had submitted in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.6 was intended to make good that omission.

9. Agenda item 8 referred to her draft recommendation (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.7) for an amendment to Board decision 1990/1, in which it was specified that the Board should meet every January for an organizational session. Experience had shown that, while the winter organizational session must be held in the first trimester of a given year, there should be a certain amount of flexibility so as to accommodate the exigencies of the Board's calendar in any given year.

10. Since the revised documentation on agenda item 9, on the standard Basic Cooperation Agreement, was the result of extensive discussion during the 1990 and 1991 sessions of the Executive Board and of numerous informal consultations between the Secretariat, the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs and Board members, the item had been included in the agenda of the organizational session for the sole purpose of having the Board take note of the Standard Agreement.

11. On behalf of the Bureau, she asked the Board to include under agenda item 10 a request from the Non-Governmental Organizations Committee with UNICEF, which wished to make a five-minute statement on activities relating to girls' education which had been undertaken in collaboration with UNICEF since the Board's 1991 session. Those activities would culminate in a conference on the subject to be held in April 1992, the recommendations of which would be presented to the Executive Board in June.

12. She shared the view of other Board members on the need to make better use of the winter organizational session, in order to streamline the workload in June. In that context, she pointed out that agenda items 5 (b) and (c) would require lengthy discussion and negotiations leading to a drafting session and a draft decision for Board approval. In order to ensure that there would be the necessary time for the translation of that decision, she proposed, on the basis of discussions with the Bureau, that the Board should examine agenda items 5 (b) and (c) immediately after agenda item 3.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (E/ICEF/1992/L.3)

13. Mr. GRAHAM (United States of America) said he hoped that the Board members would make optimal use of the possibilities afforded by the organizational session to reach agreement on the Board's work. The timely distribution of documents had considerably facilitated the Board's preparations for the organizational session and he hoped that the same practice would be followed in the regular session in June. The decision to hold organizational sessions was based on the understanding that they would be devoted specifically to questions of organization or procedure. The 1992 agenda, however, contained at least two items - item 9 in particular - which were not of a purely procedural nature and which should be dealt with very rapidly. Should one of those items occasion a long substantive debate, it would be preferable to defer its consideration to the June regular session.

14. The CHAIRMAN said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Board wished to adopt the agenda, together with the suggestions that had been made.

15. It was so decided.

OVERVIEW OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

16. Mr. GRANT (Executive Director), reviewing key developments since the previous autumn, said that 1991 had been a year of intense activity in the fields of health, water and sanitation, education and nutrition, and that the momentum achieved in 1990 was continuing.

17. The activities generated by the World Summit for Children had proceeded at a brisk pace. The Convention on the Rights of the Child had been ratified by 114 countries, and national programmes of action were in different stages of preparation in more than 120 countries. Of those countries, 28 had finalized their plans, 18 had completed drafts or outlines and 78 had initiated work. The Fund's activities in 1991 and early 1992 had been focused on the implementation of the year 2000 goals which had been established by the Executive Board in April 1991 and endorsed by the World Summit for Children. The World Summit Declaration and Plan of Action had been signed by a total of 135 Heads of State and Government. In January 1992, during the first summit-level meeting of the Security Council, the leaders of the Russian Federation, Austria and Morocco had signed the document. At every major regional meeting, the principles endorsed and the commitments made at the World Summit for Children had been reaffirmed. For example, at the OAU Youth Summit held in Abuja, Nigeria in June, 36 African Heads of State had supported the goals of the World Summit and had finalized their national programmes of action; they had also requested the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to convene a meeting of donors in the autumn of 1992 in order to consider external resource needs in the light of those goals. Other important developments which would promote the implementation of the Plan of Action had included: the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, held in Harare,

(Mr. Grant)

Zimbabwe, in October; the Francophone Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Paris, in November; the Caribbean Summit for Children, held in Bridgetown, Guyana, in November; the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference, held in Dakar, Senegal, in December; the Central American Summit on Human Development, held in December, at which seven Heads of State of countries in the region had made a commitment to implement the Plan; the meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation; the international conference on ending micronutrient deficiencies, held in Montreal, in October; and the international meeting on safe motherhood, convened by the World Bank at the beginning of March.

18. In October 1991, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Executive Director of UNICEF had certified to the Secretary-General that the goal of global immunization coverage of 80 per cent of all children had been met. Such an achievement had resulted from the largest cooperative effort ever undertaken in peacetime, an effort that was saving the lives of more than 3,000 children daily. The progress made up to December 1990 in the area of universal immunization had been maintained throughout the world up to early 1992, even in African countries which were experiencing serious political problems. In Mexico, the child immunization campaign had exceeded the 1991 goal of 90 per cent vaccine coverage.

19. With regard to the activities generated by the World Summit for Children, the countries which had made the least progress were those of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Commonwealth of Independent States, almost none of which had been able to finalize their national programmes of action. In Western Europe and North America, programmes had already been finalized or were nearing completion. The sub-Saharan African countries were currently facing the greatest difficulties, as they were the ones which had suffered the worst impact of the debt crisis, natural and man-made emergencies and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS); it was in that region that the success or failure of the Summit objectives would be decided. In that context, he welcomed the decision of the Council of Ministers of OAU to convene an international donors conference in Dakar, Senegal, at the end of November 1992.

20. The special session of the UNICEF-WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy had endorsed the "baby-friendly" hospital initiative which had arisen from Board decision 1991/22 as a means of promoting breast-feeding and, subsequently, an end to the free distribution of breast-milk substitutes to maternity facilities and hospitals. The initiative had achieved excellent results in the 12 countries in which it had been tested; it was expected that, by the end of 1992, the goal of ending the free and low-cost distribution of such products in all countries would be met.

21. With regard to vaccine prices, there had been a 36 per cent increase in 1992 as compared with 1991, particularly in Europe. UNICEF and WHO had undertaken discussions with the suppliers on means of resolving that situation.

(Mr. Grant)

22. With regard to procurement, the offices of the UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen had been expanded with a view to the development of coordinated United Nations procurement. Copenhagen had thus become the centre of the United Nations procurement system. In 1991, there had been a substantial increase in the UNICEF warehouse throughput level; some 400 emergency shipments had been made to approximately 60 countries, including Iraq, Ethiopia and Somalia.

23. As to education, provision had been made for an increase in UNICEF support for basic learning and literacy and cooperation with UNESCO, the World Bank and other agencies had been intensified. The alternative education component of many country programmes had been strengthened.

24. In 1991 and the beginning of 1992, a number of unprecedented emergency situations had arisen. In that connection, he welcomed the new role of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, who would play a vital role in coordinating actions in politically complex emergency situations. During the reporting period, UNICEF had provided emergency assistance to approximately 50 countries; in that connection, the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa deserved special mention. Somalia had been one of the countries in which UNICEF had encountered the greatest difficulties in carrying out its humanitarian tasks; the level of violence was such that, regrettably, a UNICEF official had lost her life.

25. UNICEF was now undertaking efforts in two new areas: southern Africa, which had been devastated by an unprecedented drought, and the Commonwealth of Independent States, where vast changes had given rise to emergency situations. UNICEF and other organizations, such as WHO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP) had sent missions to all the Republics of the former Soviet Union, with the exception of Georgia, in order to assess their needs; reports on the results of those missions had already been completed. The reports had been approved at a meeting on the situation in the Commonwealth of Independent States which had been convened in Washington, D.C., on the initiative of the United States of America; on that occasion, a decision had been taken to hold another meeting in April 1992.

26. As to the financial situation, in 1991 UNICEF's total income had been $807 million, or $51 million less than had been forecast in the medium-term plan and $14 million less than the income for 1990. That was discouraging. The difference between the expected figures and the actual figures was attributable almost entirely to the increase in the value of the United States dollar, since most pledges were made in national currencies. However, expenditure had also declined because the purchasing power of the dollar had increased and year-end liquidity had been greater than in the previous year.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE 1992 REGULAR SESSION

(b) CHAIRMAN'S WORKING PAPER ON BOARD PROCEDURES (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5)

(c) PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK, EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION, 15 TO 26 JUNE 1992 (E/ICEF/1992/1)

27. Mr. WILLIAMS (Secretary of the Board), introducing the documentation for the session, noted that document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5 first summarized the Board's deliberations on the system for electing the Chairman of the Board, whose term was currently one year. Whereas under the current system the chairmanship rotated between a developing country and an industrialized country, other proposals had been considered, including a system of geographical rotation and a system whereby the chairmanship of the Board held by developing countries for two consecutive terms would then pass to an industrialized country for one term.

28. The paper also discussed ways of alleviating the time pressure during regular sessions of the Board, including proposals that the regular session should be extended by three to five days, that parallel meetings of the two Committees should be scheduled and that the general debate should be held only every two years, in non-budget years. The problem of documentation, including the number and length of documents, was also studied.

29. In the recommendation, which covered those aspects on which the Chairman and other members of the Board believed that consensus would easily be reached, it was suggested that the time allocated to the general debate should be shortened by concluding it on the evening of the second day of the Board session. The response of the Executive Director would be delivered on the morning of the fourth day and, in normal years, the Programme Committee would begin its meetings at 10 a.m. on Thursday morning.

30. The recommendation also referred to the need for the scrupulous observance for the 10-minute time-limit for statements in the general debate and the 7-minute time-limit for statements by delegations in committees. The secretariat was requested to investigate the possibility of installing a signalling system to indicate and monitor the time-limit for speakers.

31. With regard to the organizational session, in section 2, paragraphs (a) and (b), of the recommendation, the reference to the "March organizational session" should read "winter organizational session" since that was the time of year when those sessions were held.

32. The recommendation also proposed that at each regular session the Board should review the subjects planned for inclusion in the agenda of the following session and the documentation and reports requested for future sessions.

33. With regard to documentation, in the Chairman's recommendation a maximum length of 15 pages, as opposed to the current limit of 24 pages, was

(Mr. Williams)

established for policy papers and other similar documents. Moreover, the periodicity of the consideration of some reports would be established.

34. The provisional annotated agenda appearing in document E/ICEF/1992/1 was similar to that of previous years and, consequently, did not envisage the possibility of holding parallel meetings of the Programme Committee and the Committee on Administration and Finance.

35. Document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9 contained a proposal by the United Kingdom for parallel running of five meetings of the two Committees, from Friday of the first week to midday on Tuesday of the second week.

36. Mr. SCOULA (United Kingdom) said that his delegation had prepared a proposed timetable which envisaged the parallel working of the two main Committees, as had been the practice in the past. In the paper, the agenda was considered from the point of view of the likely time required for discussion of the main items in both Committees, and it was concluded that parallel running of the two Committees was now essential.

37. Accordingly, his delegation suggested that the Committee on Administration and Finance should start its work on Friday, 19 June, and finish it on 23 June, thus overlapping to some extent with the work of the Programme Committee. That procedure would remove the need for three of the currently scheduled nine evening meetings and enable the work of the Drafting Committee to be carried out almost entirely during the day without any serious effect on the work of either Committee. The Programme Committee would be able to deal with the Summit Declaration and Plan of Action, the medium-term plan, global funds, the Bamako Initiative, UNICEF health policies, and the programme reviews for Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa and would start parallel meetings only with the interregional programmes. Thereafter, the Programme Committee would consider more specialized issues such as AIDS, acute respiratory infections, and women in development, so that the overlap affected mostly those areas where specialized interests were involved. The Committee on Administration and Finance would consider the financial plan and financial reports, the office space strategy for central headquarters, and the structure and format of budget documents, concluding with the Greeting Card operation - all of which were issues of specific interest to certain groups of experts, but not necessarily to all members of all delegations.

38. If issues arose in the Committees which were of wider interest, they could be raised in plenary meeting where all members could participate. His delegation believed that its proposal was a more coordinated, less hectic and better planned alternative which had no serious drawbacks and would make it possible to use the time available to better advantage.

39. Mr. HAAKONSEN (Denmark) said that he supported the Chairman's recommendations on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5 and be urged the Board to approve them and

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(Mr. Laakonsen, Denmark)

implement them without delay. He felt, however, that the rationalization could have gone further, particularly with regard to the clustering and biennialization of agenda items.

40. Unfortunately, the Board's deliberations on the subject had not yet led to the adoption of specific measures. The most significant proposal that had been considered was that the scheduling of parallel meetings should be formalized in order to make the Board's work more efficient and obviate the need for night meetings. In that connection, his delegation fully supported the proposal made by the United Kingdom in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9. Although it was aware of the limitations of smaller delegations, it felt that it would be useful to formalize the holding of parallel meetings, which in any event were held during the session.

41. Ms. LIEDES (Finland) said that the work of the Executive Board would be more efficient if it concentrated on essential policy matters. The Chairman's recommendations on the Board's future work and procedures should be seen only as a first step in the process of rationalization. The practice of grouping together agenda items for biennial consideration should be continued. Those programmes and issues within the regular mandate of UNICEF which had alreaDy been approved, such as AIDS, acute respiratory infections and women in development, should be examined as part of the Executive Director's report, and the main issues and policy matters should be taken up in connection with the various agenda items.

42. With regard to formalizing the scheduling of parallel meetings, her delegation welcomed the proposal by the United Kingdom but believed that such meetings should be planned well in advance so as not to be prejudicial to the smaller delegations.

43. Mr. KABIR (Observer for Bangladesh) supported the Chairman's recommendations on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board, contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5, with the exception of paragraphs (c) and (d) of the recommendation on the rationalization of time, which he considered unacceptable since they discriminated between delegations headed by ministers or other high-level functionaries and observer delegations, which should also be given slots early in the general debate.

44. His delegation supported the idea of biennializing certain agenda items. While it appreciated the justification for scheduling parallel meetings, it believed it was important to take into account the difficulties faced by smaller delegations if that arrangement was formalized.

45. Mr. WARD (Canada) said that, while he strongly welcomed the recommendations on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5, he believed that the Board could make still greater efforts in that direction. In particular, it could focus its attention on policy questions and continue the practice of clustering agenda

(Mr. Ward, Canada)

items. His delegation supported the proposal, submitted by the United Kingdom delegation, that the scheduling of parallel meetings should be formalized, since that would permit more efficient planning.

46. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) supported the proposal submitted by the United States that, during the current session, delegations should concentrate on the consideration of organizational or procedural matters and should defer consideration of substantive issues to the June session.

47. He also supported the Chairman's recommendations on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board, which constituted a first step in the process of rationalization. The Russian Federation stood ready to further that process and thereby to enhance the work of UNICEF.

48. Finally, he supported the United Kingdom proposal that scheduling of parallel meetings should be formalized. While he understood the misgivings expressed by smaller delegations, he believed that the proposal would render the sessions of the Executive Board more productive and would obviate the need for night meetings.

49. Mr. VACEK (Czechoslovakia) supported the Chairman's recommendations on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board, as well as the proposal that the scheduling of parallel sessions should be formalized, submitted by the United Kingdom. However, since, at previous sessions, measures had been adopted with a view to the rationalizatqion of the Board's work without achieving measurable results, he stressed that the Chairman must constantly remind delegations of the need to make optimal use of the time allocated to them. At the same time, much could still be done to improve the presentation of documentation.

50. Mr. KOIKE (Japan) said that, while he supported the specific recommendations on the rationalization of the work and procedures of the Executive Board contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5, the Board was overloaded, and still greater efforts were needed to rationalize its work. In the suggested timetable and order of business for Executive Board and committee sessions, contained in document E/ICEF/1992/1, no parallel meetings were scheduled. Since experience had shown that it was impossible to cover all the agenda items without recourse to that arrangement, however, his delegation supported the alternative proposal on the organization of work for the session submitted by the United Kingdom.

51. Ms. AL-HAMAMI (Yemen) said that her delegation, like other small delegations, hoped that parallel meetings would be avoided, so that it could attend all the meetings held during the session. In particular, it would prefer drafting meetings not to be scheduled at the same time as other formal meetings.

52. Ms. DEBLAUW (United States of America) supported the recommendations on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board. The time-limits on statements in the general debate and the limits on the length of documents and the periodicity of reporting would also help to control the workload of the Executive Board.

53. Her delegation particularly welcomed the proposal that a system should be established for the review of subjects which were to be considered at subsequent sessions, but it wondered how that review would be carried out and whether draft decisions would be reviewed in plenary meeting before being finally approved, thus obviating requests for unnecessary reports.

54. It might perhaps be necessary to schedule parallel meetings of the Programme Committee and the Committee on Administration and Finance. In that regard, she strongly supported the United Kingdom proposal on the organization of work for the 1992 session. That proposal formalized what had been the Board's practice in recent years and, at the same time, organized the programme in a logical manner so that members could make optimal use of their time.

55. Ms. MEHTA (India) said she welcomed the efforts made by the United Kingdom to rationalize the work of the 1992 session of the Executive Board, but believed that formalizing the scheduling of parallel meetings did not solve the problem, since it limited the ability of smaller delegations to participate in meetings. Some delegations had argued that parallel meetings were, in fact, already being held. As far as the current system was concerned, however, the only meetings held in parallel were drafting sessions or drafting and committee meetings. It would be far better to extend the Board session by a few days.

56. As for the rotation of the chairmanship, her delegation, which had always advocated a system of geographical rotation which respected the principle of equity among different regional groups, asked the Board to give serious consideration to the proposal that the current rotation syster of one-to-one between developing and industrialized countries should be replaced by a system of two-to-one between developing and industrialized countries.

57. Ms. ZINDOGA (Zimbabwe) supported the proposal just made by the representative of India that the one-to-one rotation system between developing and industrialized countries should be replaced by a two-to-one system. However, she did not support the United Kingdom proposal that the scheduling of parallel meetings should be formalized. Rationalization of the work of the Executive Board should not be achieved at the expense of smaller delegations. Instead, the possibility of lengthening the regular session must be considered.

58. Ms. MBELLA NGOMBA (Cameroon) said that further consultations should be held to examine in greater depth the question of extending the session by three to five days. If that proposal was rejected, there was a risk that smaller delegations would be marginalized. Her delegation believed that the chairmanship should be rotated on the basis of equitable geographical distribution. The proposal to alternate between developing and industralized countries on a two-to-one basis deserved support.

59. Mr. POST (Netherlands) supported the Chairman's recommendations on the rationalization of work. His delegation also shared the view expressed by the representatives of Denmark, Finland and Canada that much remained to be done in that area, such as the biennialization of the general debate. His delegation understood the concerns expressed by smaller delegations with regard to parallel meetings. Although in the provisional annotated agenda contained in document E/ICEF/1992/1 no parallel meetings had been scheduled, the reality could not be ignored: at previous sessions special arrangements had had to be made so that parallel meetings could be held on an ad hoc basis. It would be preferable to face the reality and resolve the problems in an organized fashion rather than to avoid the reality and extend the Executive Board session. If the session were extended, delegations would feel less need to reduce the number and length of their statements, which would militate against the rationalization of work.

60. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) suggested that the Executive Board session should be extended by three to five days to allow delegations of developing countries, which were generally smaller, to participate in all the deliberations. Furthermore, his delegation supported the rotation of the chairmanship on the basis of two terms for developing countries to one term for industrialized countries. As for the rationalization of work, the volume of documentation should be reduced to allow for more detailed study.

61. Ms. ERKISSON FOGH (Sweden) fully supported the Board's observations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5, as well as the valuable analysis in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9, submitted by the United Kingdom. The reasons for that support had been expressed quite adequately by other delegations, Denmark in particular.

62. Mr. JADMANI (Pakistan) said that holding parallel meetings would not be a solution, since several smaller delegations, including his own, would not be able to participate in all of them. The solution, therefore, was to extend the session by three to five days. With regard to the rotation of the chairmanship, his delegation believed that it should be rotated equitably on the basis of the principle of two terms for developing countries to one term for industrialized countries.

63. Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania) felt that the rotation of the chairmanship on a two-to-one basis between developing and industrialized countries would be more equitable and would be in line with prevailing practice in other organs of the United Nations system. His delegation hoped that consensus on that issue could be reached at future Executive Board meetings.

64. With regard to the holding of parallel meetings, his delegation welcomed the views and concerns expressed by the United Kingdom and other delegations which had supported that proposal. It hoped, however, that their representatives had listened with the greatest attention to the concerns expressed by smaller delegations, such as Pakistan, which would find it difficult to participate fully in parallel meetings. His delegation therefore favoured extending the session to permit consideration of all items. It was hoped that the Executive Board could reach consensus on that issue, taking into account the opinions of all interested parties.

65. Ms. ROEDSMOEN (Norway) supported the recommendations contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5 and commended the exhaustive work done by the United Kingdom delegation in preparing document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9. Over the past few years, the Board had analysed various methods of rationalizing its programme, reducing documentation and organizing its meetings more efficiently. It had also considered the length of its sessions. Her delegation believed that the work of the Board should be concerned mainly with the rationalization of the programme of work. It did not favour extending the time allocated to meetings and agreed with the delegations of Finland, Canada and others that a smaller number of policy issues should be examined at Board sessions. Some agenda items currently considered separately could be discussed in the Executive Director's report or could be considered together. That alone would reduce the documentation, which was currently excessive.

66. Mr. COSTA FILHO (Brazil) supported the recommendations on the rationalization of the work of the Executive Board. He commended the delegation of the United Kingdom on its efforts to find a solution to the problem of parallel meetings, but he believed that there was consensus among the Board that it would be preferable to avoid them. The United Kingdom proposal that parallel meetings should be formalized was, therefore, not a solution. Greater efforts should be made to rationalize the work and, as a last resort, to extend the session.

67. Mr. LENZI (Italy) said that the United Kingdom proposal was useful and was the most expedient solution available to the Board for the next session. All delegacions - including his own, which was not very large - had difficulty meeting their obligations with regard to the calendar of conferences. The Board should organize and plan its work as efficiently as possible so that all delegations would be aware at all time of what was happening and would be able to deploy their members as effectively as possible.

68. His delegation believed that the proposal to extend the session would not encourage delegations to focus as they should. In general, the more time that

(Mr. Lenzi, Italy)

was available, the more time would be required. Furthermore, meetings of various bodies were held simultaneously in New York and all delegations had to adapt to that situation. Extending the UNICEF session by a week would divert the attention of delegations from other forthcoming meetings, such as those of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Board should not improvise, but should as far as possible be guided by past practice. He urged all delegations to participate to the fullest extent possible, in an organized manner in such parallel meetings as it would be necessary to schedule.

69. Mr. TALAVERA (Peru) said that his delegation favoured a system of rotation of the chairmanship on the basis of geographical regions. If that was impossible it would support the proposal of the representative of India that the chairmanship should be assigned to donor countries for one term and to developing countries for two terms. With regard to parallel meetings, his delegation commended the efforts of the United Kingdom delegation but did not share the view that, with that practice, the work of the Executive Board would be better adapted to reality and would thus be more efficient and effective. The best way to ensure good results from the work of the Board was to facilitate and promote greater and more active participation by all member States. A large number of those States could not participate in parallel meetings, which should therefore be avoided as far as possible.

70. Ms. BOUKADOUM (Algeria) supported the proposal that the Board's session should be extended by three to five days. That would obviate the need for parallel meetings which, although sometimes necessary, should be kept to a minimum. Parallel meetings did not allow adequate participation in the work of the Board by smaller delegations such as her own. Algeria strongly supported the principle of equitable geographical rotation, a principle which was, moreover, applied in other United Nations bodies. It was opposed to the proposal contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5 that observer delegations could be slotted to speak towards the end of the debate. In her opinion, that proposal was discriminatory and could set a dangerous precedent.

71. Mrs. SYAHRUDDIN (Indonesia) said that the United Kingdom proposal had merit and was a good basis for discussion. However, since many developing countries had explained the difficulties that the holding of parallel meetings would create for them, the Board should take those problems into account and try to rationalize its work more. In addition, Indonesia supported the rotation of the chairmanship, which should be assigned for two sessions to the developing countries and one session to the developed countries.

72. Mr. SIKKANDER (Sri Lanka) said that small countries had a very limited number of delegates, and therefore thought should be given to the question of parallel meetings, so as to find a way of not imposing too great a burden on them.

73. Mr. TANTOT (France) said that, while he regretted the opposition and concern aroused by the United Kingdom proposal, he supported the search for a solution that would take that delegation's comments into account. France did not wish to create problems for the small delegations. In any case, it was well known that some large delegations were not as effective as others with smaller forces whose representatives were, however, highly trained. Instead of extending the Board's session, France would prefer to keep to the agreed dates.

74. Mr. BUKBULIA (Barbados) said that he supported the rotation of the chairmanship among the various regions, as was done in other United Nations bodies. As to the useful suggestions by the United Kingdom on a very complex problem, it should be recalled that, as part of the question of rationalization, the length of documents and the time-limit on statements should also be considered. The UNICEF mandate had become much broader and included many items that the Board tried to consider in two weeks. That problem, which had been attacked on only one front, required consultation and discussion. Even though the recommendation of the United Kingdom might make the participation of small countries more difficult, that was not the purpose of the proposal.

75. Mr. SCOTT (Australia) said that as a member of a small delegation he understood the concern of other smaller delegations about the difficulties posed by simultaneous meetings. However, it basically came down to choosing the lesser of two evils. Experience had shown that there would inevitably be meetings that were held simultaneously, and therefore the Board had to decide if they should be scheduled in advance or if arrangements should be made as the work proceeded, which had in the past caused problems. Some delegations had proposed that the session should be extended. However, as the Netherlands delegation had pointed out, such a step could lead to relaxation of discipline. Also, an extension of the session would increase costs and use up funds that could serve for the basic functions of UNICEF. Therefore, Australia supported the United Kingdom proposal to hold a limited number of simultaneous meetings.

76. Mrs. MENENDEZ (Spain) said that she supported the United Kingdom recommendation to hold simultaneous meetings, although she understood why other delegations were troubled by it, since her own was also not very large. In addition, she believed that it would be counter-productive to extend the June session because it might coincide with the meetings of the Economic and Social Council.

77. Mrs. GREEN (Jamaica) expressed reservations regarding the institutionalization of simultaneous sessions because countries which, like her own, had delegations with few members would be at a disadvantage. On the other hand, she supported the proposal regarding the rotation of the chairmanship on the basis of geographical distribution.

78. Mr. VILCHES ASCHER (Nicaragua) said that he supported equitable geographical rotation, a practice applied in many bodies and agencies of the United Nations. He could not, however, endorse the idea of two consecutive terms for developing countries and one term for the developed countries. Although the United Kingdom proposal was interesting, Nicaragua could not fully support it because simultaneous meetings were not convenient and would not be productive for the delegations of the smaller countries. Consequently, he proposed that an intermediate solution should be found that would take into account the interests of both developing and developed countries.

79. Mrs. KHOURY (Observer for Palestine) said that she supported those delegations which maintained that holding simultaneous meetings would be an obstacle to full participation by large as well as small delegations. She believed that a system of simultaneous meetings would be very difficult to apply.

80. Mr. BORCHARD (Germany) said that he supported the proposals contained in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9 and not the idea of extending the session. The main problem was the excessive volume of work, since documents and meetings were too long and speakers' statements exceeded the time-limit. Simultaneous meetings had been necessary in the past but his delegation did not believe them to be the only problem, although it understood the concern of the smaller delegations.

81. Mr. WANG Xinggon (China) said that he supported the proposal by India and other delegations that the chairmanship should be rotated on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, which meant that the developing countries would have two consecutive terms and the developed countries only one. As to the dilemma of either holding simultaneous meetings or extending the session, his delegation proposed that some of the agenda items of the main Committees should be discussed in the general debate, which would reduce the time the two Committees needed to complete their work.

82. Mr. RYSINSKI (Poland) expressed support for the new approach taken in document E/ICEF/1992/CRP.9, which provided for the holding of simultaneous meetings. Such a practice, although it posed difficulties for the smaller delegations like Poland, enabled delegations to prepare themselves better in advance and to concentrate on the most important issues. In the long run the problem could be solved by rationalizing the work and the volume of documentation over the course of two or more years.

83. Mrs. LISIDINI (Uruguay) said that she agreed that simultaneous meetings had many disadvantages for the smaller delegations. She therefore supported the proposal that the regular session of the Executive Board should be extended by three to five days. In addition, she supported the proposal of the delegation of India that the current system of rotating the chairmanship between a developing country and a developed country should be replaced by a system of rotation between two developing countries and one developed country.

84. Mr. SCOULAR (United Kingdom) said that his proposal on the organization of work of the 1992 session was meant precisely to ensure that the meetings that were held simultaneously would be the least important ones. Furthermore, in order to attend all meetings, delegations would need only one team consisting of three persons: one for each of the meetings plus one as a substitute. Therefore even a small delegation should be enough. Moreover, the proposal had undeniable advantages. Perhaps a drafting meeting chaired by a member of the Board should be held to reach an agreement.

85. Mr. WARD (Canada) said that he welcomed the United Kingdom suggestion that the question should be discussed further in a drafting group. If there were no objections, he would like to preside over the group.

86. Mr. VACEK (Czechoslovakia) said that, although his delegation never had been and never would be a large one, he endorsed the proposal of the United Kingdom delegation because of its practical advantages: no one could be an expert on all the subjects dealt with by UNICEF. If a delegation consisted of only one person, that person had to set priorities and not attend the less useful meetings. On the other hand, he understood the concern of delegations which feared that they would not be able to attend two important meetings. That could be avoided by submitting written statements to the Chairman. A mechanism would have to be created for the purpose, by which statements so submitted could be brought to the attention of all delegations.

87. The CHAIRMAN said that it was her understanding that those items dealt with in the document on the future work and procedures of the Executive Board (E/ICEF/1992/CRP.5) on which no delegation had made comments were in general acceptable to all members of the Board.

88. She asked whether all delegations agreed that the current system of rotating the chairmanship of the the Executive Board between one developing country and one developed country should be replaced by a system of rotation between two developing countries and one developed country.

89. Mr. VACEK (Czechoslovakia) said that he believed that there was no consensus on the matter.

90. The CHAIRMAN suggested that a drafting meeting should be held to determine if the Programme Committee and the Committee on Administration and Finance should hold simultaneous meetings or if the regular session of the Board should be extended. She further suggested that the representative of Canada, who had offered to do so, should preside over that meeting.

91. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.54 p.m.